

HONORING JAMES RIZZO ON HIS CAMPAIGN TO BE ELECTED TO THE CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 23

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Brown, a resident of Chautauqua County for his quest to become the elected representative to the twenty-third legislative district in the Chautauqua County Legislature. Although Mr. Rizzo was not able to realize his dream he has been able to make an impact on other's lives in a different way.

The campaign trail is a difficult path to take. Any person with a dream may enter but only a few are able to reach the end. Mr. Rizzo traveled that path with his head held high and a smile on his face the entire way. I have no doubt that his kind demeanor left a lasting impression on the voters of district 23.

Chautauqua County is blessed to have such strong candidates with a desire to make this county the wonderful place that we all know it can be. Mr. Rizzo is one of those people and that is why Mr. Speaker I rise to honor him today.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF DICK PALMER

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Dick Palmer, a Murfreesboro, Tennessee, native who has been the voice of the Middle Tennessee State University Blue Raiders for 25 years.

A 1960 graduate of MTSU, Dick is a Blue Raider through and through. His presence on the airwaves certainly will be missed. For more than 46 years, Dick has been involved in sporting events in Tennessee, from his 9 year stint calling play-by-play for Jackson high school sports to his work with the Memphis Blues baseball team, Memphis Pros ABA team, and Memphis Grizzlies World Football League team.

Although he will be retiring from MTSU broadcasting at the end of this season, I have no doubt that Dick will continue to be an active and valued member of the Murfreesboro community. Not only a family businessman in charge of operations for Palmer Wholesale, Dick also has served as a mentor and role model to countless young people as a Little League baseball coach. I even had the privilege of being coached by Dick when he was my seventh grade basketball coach at Hobgood Elementary School.

Dick's dedication to his community and to the Blue Raiders is truly an inspiration and a shining example of Middle Tennesseans at their best. It has been a pleasure knowing him since I was a young man, and I am proud to call him a family friend. I thank him for all of

his contributions to Middle Tennessee and wish him all the best for his retirement.

SIKHS ENTHUSIASTICALLY CELEBRATE GURU NANAK'S BIRTHDAY WITH REVERENCE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, last month, Sikhs gathered from around the world to celebrate the birthday of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, with devotion, enthusiasm, and reverence. Over 25,000 Sikhs gathered in Nankana Sahib, in what is now Pakistan, for the celebration.

The celebration included reading of the Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, the singing of hymns, a procession through the streets, and speeches. One of the speeches was given by Dr. Gunjit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, the organization that leads the Sikh struggle for independence. Dr. Aulakh's speech was punctuated with slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad," which means "Long live Khalistan." Khalistan is the name of the Sikh state that declared its independence on October 7, 1987.

The celebration was carried live on Pakistani television and on Punjab Radio from London, which is available worldwide.

Guru Nanak had two companions, one Hindu and one Muslim. He was a shining example of acceptance of all. When Guru Nanak passed away, his burial shawl was torn in half and burned by the Hindus, and buried by the Muslims. Both Hindus and Muslims revered him.

Yet today, Hindus persecute the Sikhs, the followers of Guru Nanak. More than 250,000 Sikhs have been murdered at the hands of the Indian government. According to the Movement Against State Repression, MASR, over 52,000 are being held without charge or trial as political prisoners in "the world's largest democracy." Over 50,000 young Sikh men were picked up by the government, tortured, murdered, and then secretly cremated. Their bodies were declared "unidentified" and never returned to their families.

Christians and Muslims throughout the country are also being persecuted. Over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland and over 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims have been killed by the government. In addition, tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and other minorities have been killed.

Are we going to stand idly by and let this happen? By stopping our aid and trade with India and by declaring our support for the fundamental democratic principle of self-determination, we can help bring real peace, prosperity, freedom, and stability to South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert the Council of Khalistan's very informative press release about the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday into the RECORD at this time.

[From the Council of Khalistan, Nov. 22, 2005]

SIKHS CELEBRATE GURU NANAK'S BIRTHDAY WITH DEVOTION, ENTHUSIASM, REVERENCE

WASHINGTON, DC.—Over 25,000 Sikhs gathered in Nankana Sahib (now in Pakistan)

last week for the celebration of the birthday of Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikh religion. About 15,000 were from Pakistan, about 4,500 were from India, and the rest were from abroad. Slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" resonated throughout Nankana Sahib during the day's speeches.

The celebration began with the performance of Akand Path, which is the The Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy scripture, was read without interruption for 48 hours leading up to Guru Nanak's birthday. Hymns were sung as midnight struck. In the morning, the Pakistan Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (PGPC) presented government officials and others with siropas. According to Sikh tradition, the afternoon was marked by a procession led by the Guru Granth Sahib, followed by the Panj Piaras, and then the Sangat, of all the Gurdwaras in Nankana Sahib, ending back at Gurdwara Janam Asthan. The evening program featured speeches given by various Sikh leaders, including Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh struggle for independence. When Dr. Aulakh raised slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad," the Sangat responded with great enthusiasm. The Sikh Nation knows that political power is essential for the enhancement of any religion. The Sikh Nation also knows that the gold was added to cover the building of Darbar Sahib when the Sikhs ruled Punjab from 1765 to 1849. Since then, it is also called the Golden Temple. After midnight the celebration concluded with ceremonies according to the Sikh rehat maryada.

The Sang at showed great devotion and reverence on this pious occasion. Guru Nanak was the founder of the Sikh religion. ("Marya Sikha Jagat Sitch Nanak Nirmal Panth Chalaya.") It was an occasion of great happiness for the Khalsa Panth. The events were carried live on Pakistani TV and on Punjab Radio from London, which is heard throughout the world. Sikhs who were able to participate in the celebration were very fortunate.

Guru Nanak confronted Sabar, the Moghul ruler of the time and called him a Jabbar (oppressor) and spoke out against the tyranny of the rulers of that time. He was even imprisoned by Babar, along with his followers. Guru Nanak travelled extensively, to the Middle East, where he visited Baghdad, and throughout India, along with his two companions, one Hindu, one Muslim. He spread his message of truthfulness, respect for the rights of individuals, earning an honest living, sharing with the needy, and praying to Almighty God. He was revered by Hindus and Muslims alike. When he left this world, his body was not found. The sheet covering his body was torn in two. The Hindus cremated it and the Muslims buried it, each according to their customs.

Guru Nanak is remembered as Baba Nanak Shah Faqir, Hindu Da Guru, Mussleman Da Pir. He preached the equality of all the human race, including gender equality.

Sikhism is a divinely revealed, monotheistic, independent religion which has 25 million followers and is the world's fifth largest religion. The Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy scripture, was written by the Gurus themselves as revealed to them by God. No body can add or delete anything in the holy scripture, which is considered to be a living Guru after the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.